



**MINUTES OF THE SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREA
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEATAC)
MEETING OF 23 August 2010**

(Minutes approved on 14 September 2010. Michael Long moved for approval as amended and Jonathan Baskin seconded the motion.)

PERSONS IN ATTENDANCE:

SEATAC MEMBERS

Dr. Jonathan Baskin
Dan Cooper (absent)
Ty Garrison
Michael Long
Dr. Thomas Scott (absent)
Dr. Cheryl Swift (absent)

REGIONAL PLANNING STAFF

Dr. Shirley Imsand (SEATAC coordinator)
Steven Mar (SEATAC coordinator)
Wesley Colvin (SEATAC coordinator)
Gina Natoli (Community Studies II)
Julie Lowry (General Plan Development)
Mark Herwick (General Plan Development)

**Camp Emerald Bay representatives and interested parties, R2010-00774,
RCUPT201000068, RENVT201000027, CDP201000001**

Steve Nelson, Biologist, PCR
Lee Harrison, WLACC - Boy Scouts of America

MINUTES pagination:

1. **Minutes of 12 July 2010, p.2**
2. **Review of Mary Carroll's resume and application to be placed on the SEATAC Certified Biologists List, p.2**
3. **Review of Greg McGowan's resume and application to be placed on the SEATAC Certified Biologists List, p.2**
4. **Review of the Biological Constraints Analysis and Biota Report for Camp Emerald Bay Project, Project No. R2010-00774, RCUPT201000068, RENVT201000027, CDP201000001, p.2**
5. **Discussion of proposed SEA-CUP by DRP staff member, Julie Lowry, p.6**

NOTE: SEATAC MEETINGS ARE INFORMAL WORKING SESSIONS. MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED VOLUNTEERS IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY. MINUTES ARE PREPARED BY PLANNING STAFF PRIMARILY FROM NOTES. SESSIONS ARE ALSO TAPE RECORDED BUT THE TAPES ARE PRIMARILY FOR BACK-UP USE BY STAFF. VISITORS ARE ADVISED TO TAKE PROPER NOTES AND/OR RECORD THE SESSION. ISSUES NOT DISCUSSED BY SEATAC DO NOT IMPLY TACIT APPROVAL. NEW OR CLARIFIED INFORMATION PRESENTED IN SUBSEQUENT SUBMITTALS MAY RAISE NEW ISSUES AND MAY REQUIRE FURTHER ANALYSIS. MINUTES ARE GENERALLY APPROVED AT THE NEXT SEATAC MEETING. DRAFT MINUTES MAY BE REQUESTED BUT ARE SUBJECT TO REVISION.

MINUTES

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Minutes of 12 July 2010** were approved as amended. Michael Long moved for approval and Ty Garrison seconded the motion.

2. **Review of Mary Carroll's resume and application to be placed on the SEATAC Certified Biologists List**

SEATAC approved Mary Carroll's application to be placed on the SEATAC Certified Biologists List with emphasis that reports submitted by her are also prepared in conjunction with experts in appropriate fields of expertise.

3. **Review of Greg McGowan resume and application to be placed on the SEATAC Certified Biologists List**

SEATAC expressed concern that Mr. McGowan's application and resume lacked evidence of the necessary field biology knowledge and experience required to prepare SEATAC reports. Experience and knowledge of oil spill responses is not sufficient for the preparation of SEATAC reports. Based on the application materials provided, SEATAC cannot approve Mr. McGowan's application to be placed on the County's SEATAC Certified Biologist List at this time. SEATAC requests that Mr. McGowan submit additional materials that demonstrate field biology experience and knowledge of impacts to sensitive flora and fauna in SEAs.

4. **Project Description: Emerald Bay, Santa Catalina Island, Johnsons Landing
Project No. R2010-00774, RCUPT201000068, RENV201000027,
CDP201000001
Applicant: Boy Scouts of America
Biologist: Steve Nelson, PCR**

The proposed project is a revision of the master plan for an existing organized camp of the Boy Scouts of America, located on an embayment on the northeast coast of Santa Catalina Island in an SEA area and close to 6 other SEA areas. Johnsons Landing was the site of a Tongva encampment, became a cattle ranch in the last part of the 1800s, and has been a Camp for the Boy Scouts of America Since 1925 with an interlude during WWII for underwater demolition training camp. The basic objective is to increase PAOT (persons at one time) occupancy from the 375 persons permitted at present, to 950 persons, which is desperately needed to accommodate both existing and future overnight usage at the camp. Current visitation is 14,000 youth and adults each year. Current accommodations are for 766 persons and more can be squeezed into camping areas. The existing master plan was approved in 2000, and has only partially been implemented. The

revised master plan would be implemented over a 10-25 year period. The revised master plan seeks to maintain, with minimal expansion or disturbance, the existing usage footprint through upgrading facilities. New construction will include:

Western area: storage facility in the far west Beuche Canyon tent area; Facilities Yard extension and bike shop in the Old Corral area at the junction of Beuche with the main unnamed drainage; 10 cabins and 2 restrooms distributed through the main tent and cabin area, 8 expanded campsite areas throughout the main tent and cabin area, an environmental learning center central to the main tent and cabin area, fuel and propane farm at the eastern edge of the main tent and cabin area; Range area: new facilities building and expanded campsite area;

Northeast Hill: 4 banks of solar photovoltaic panels, 4 wind turbines?, 3 cabins, 2 expanded campsite areas; portable storage expansion

Commons area: Administrative building; 4 expanded campsite areas; SCUBA building, canopy pavilion, expanded dining and kitchen building;

Southeastern Hill: 10 staff housing buildings (5 previously permitted), restroom building (previously permitted), Lido deck, Hill canopy pavilion, 9 cabins, restroom and propane farm. General: New and remodeled bathrooms will accommodate males, females, youths, and adults. The plan will reduce the Camp's water and energy consumption with the addition of wind and/or solar power and water saving devices and a desalination system, consolidate facility maintenance and supplies areas, and provide for shade structures. Flood control using gabions to leave natural streambed is proposed. There is a question of determination of riparian area for compliance with the Santa Catalina Island Specific Plan.

SEA RESOURCE DESCRIPTION: Johnson's Landing (Santa Catalina Island SEA Area No. 17) is located in the eastern canyons and ridges of Silver Peak ridgeline on the northeast seashore at Emerald Cove. Although this area has been badly damaged by goats, there are a number of special interest island endemic species, including *Ceanothus arboreus*, *Cercocarpus betuloides* var. *blancheae*, *Dendromecon harfordii*, *Galvesia speciosa*, *Lyonothamnus floribundus* ssp. *floribundus*, *Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*, *Ribes viburnifolium* and *Scrophularia villosa*. Other species of interest in the SEA include *Xylococcus bicolor*.

Action Requested: Review of the Biological Constraints Analysis and Biota Report. This project has been previously reviewed under Project No. 99-038 at previous SEATAC meetings on 13 September 1999, and 7 February 2000.

Applicant's comments:

The original master plan from 1999-2000, did not take a few issues into consideration, chiefly the number of existing facilities and the number of people that used the site.

Historic summer peak time capacity has been at about 500 persons. The project will improve the site to accommodate the appropriate numbers of people who use the site. Increasing capacity will also help balance out the increasing costs for operating the facility.

The facility is primarily used by the Boy Scouts during the summer but it also hosts other types of programs such as outdoor education programs and retreats.

SEATAC Comments and Recommendations:

- 1) SEATAC asked additional questions regarding capacity and usage. Applicant clarified that the project goal is to have summertime capacity at 950 persons and year-round outdoor education capacity at 500 persons (for indoor housing).
- 2) Applicant mentions that part of the project involves replacing inadequate existing tent structures with upgraded, more permanent structures.
- 3) SEATAC commented that the 30 in. utility line is not shown on any of the plans and applicant confirmed that more utility lines would be installed to service new buildings. Utility lines should be labeled as to type, old, new, etc.
- 4) Applicant states that occupancy capacity can be higher because water consumption is low. Applicant also stated that water reclamation options are also being explored for the project. The goal would be to have, at minimum, secondary water treatment and tertiary treatment if possible. Desalination would also be an option.
- 5) SEATAC commented on how impacts to the marine environment immediately adjacent to the project were not considered in terms of desalination waste, sedimentation due to disturbance in the watershed, and general urban development of the area. SEATAC would like to know information of the marine environment such as what kind of fishes, marine mammals, and other marine organisms are present there.
- 6) SEATAC is glad that the project stays within the camp zone but is concerned with secondary impacts coming from the project (the potential for the project to increase human presence and impact to the area) and how to control them.
- 7) SEATAC expressed concern that 19 structures are being proposed within the 100 foot buffer zone around the stream course. The applicant stated that they didn't want to expand the camp outside of the existing camp area and that most of the existing area has had historical usage with buildings in it.

- 8) SEATAC stated that there wasn't a specific delineation of what vegetation would be taken out for the new structures. Applicant stated that it is mostly non-native grassland - most trees are non-native (mostly eucalyptus). The riparian corridor is mostly a dry, unvegetated wash most of the time.
- 9) SEATAC suggested that structures be labeled on the map according to existing, demolished, and what will be replaced. A table should also be created that labels the new buildings, what kind of structure it is, if it is replacing an existing structure (and what kind of existing structure being replaced), and what type of vegetation would be impacted by the new structure. Since structures are proposed within the riparian zone, a thorough documentation of proposed structures should be made.
- 10) Gina Natoli of DRP is concerned if the existing structures and uses on the site are a result of the expanded capacity of the campsite.
- 11) Ms. Natoli stated that any local native vegetation on the site would be considered Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA). If the applicant is increasing occupancy from 375 to 950 it is considered a change to the local coastal program which requires an amendment that must go through the Regional Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, and the California Coastal Commission.
- 12) SEATAC mentioned that riparian areas are dynamic and asked the applicant what the potential for riparian recovery was on the project site. The applicant stated that the water in the riparian area would need to be slowed down, the riparian vegetation is sparse, and that the riparian area is in overall bad shape.
- 13) SEATAC requests no new ash trees be planted on the site and would like more documentation of the trees. Current eucalyptus trees can remain but need to be contained. New landscaping should be native to the Island and taken from the Conservancy's approved list.
- 14) SEATAC recommends that the applicant show that the current density of the trees & vegetation meet the thinning requirements of the Fire Department.
- 15) SEATAC commented that it will be a tough call to declare this project as proposed compatible with the SEA with a threefold increase in occupancy that doesn't include an expansion of passive recreation activities.

ACTION TAKEN: Further SEATAC review is required. Incorporate the above comments and recommendations into a supplementary packet and resubmit to SEATAC.

5. Discussion of proposed SEA-CUP by Department of Regional Planning staff member, Julie Lowry

Currently, the existing SEA CUP is combined with the Hillside Management CUP. As part of the General Plan update, the boundaries of the SEAs are being updated and the SEA CUP is being separated from the Hillside Management CUP. The Department has a working draft of the proposed SEA ordinance.

Notes on Presentation and SEATAC Comments and Recommendations:

- 1) The new ordinance seeks to clearly lay out the process for the applicant to come before SEATAC to discuss biota issues prior to project design. The developer should come present the biological resources on their project site and then receive initial guidance from SEATAC. At the subsequent meeting the developer would then present the biota report and project design.**
- 2) Design standards are being added. The review authority has the ability to modify the standards if the project can't meet them based on some type of constraint.**
- 3) A recording mechanism is being added where the applicant will fill out a report for the Planning Commission and staff that shows an evaluation of what the applicant has done with the resources on the site. It should show the number of acres of open space, acres of SEA retained, etc.**
- 4) The report should include a sensitive species list known to occur on the site and show what species are affected. SEATAC commented that elimination of species should be defined as individual species and not the extinction of a species. A definition of "sensitive" should be included. The definition of "elimination" should maybe include or be changed to "a reduction" of species.**
- 5) SEATAC commented that the term "blue line stream" should not be used. Terms that can replace "blue line stream" are "regulatory water of the [state or U.S.]" or "riparian habitat."**
- 6) The applicant's report is intended to show that a good faith effort has been put into meeting SEATAC's requests for compatibility with an SEA.**
- 7) A Department staff member or SEATAC member would make regular (annual) staff reports to RPC or review authority regarding updated SEA information and other SEA activities.**
- 8) SEATAC commented that the Purpose in Section 22.42.10 should include a statement saying that the people of Los Angeles County are the beneficiaries of these protected biological resources.**

- 9) Ecological Transition Areas are being added as a subset to the SEAs. Projects in these areas would not be evaluated as thoroughly as projects located within SEAs.
- 10) The term “subset” was deemed to be unsuitable for use.
- 11) Hillside Management CUP is establishing a 10,000 cu. yd. grading threshold.
- 12) Minor Use Permit requirements for smaller projects that would not need SEATAC review.
- 13) Exemptions to CUPs and other permits are listed in the draft.
- 14) SEATAC items are subject to director’s review, which technically means that the staff biologist has discretion in evaluating SEATAC items.
- 15) Mining permits are subject to SEATAC review but do not require an SEA CUP.
- 16) Currently, if an SEA is within a parcel but a project is located outside of the SEA boundaries on the parcel, it gets reviewed by SEATAC. That’s changing where if the project is completely outside of the SEA boundaries (including infrastructure, grading, fuel mod, etc.) it is exempt.
- 17) Design Standards – Biological Resources: the idea is that sensitive species and habitat will be given the highest priority in the design process.
- 18) SEATAC commented that woodlands protection distance should be equivalent to fire clearance distance.
- 19) SEATAC commented that under section (a) under (3) Wildlife corridors, mountain lions should probably be eliminated since they’re hard to quantify.
- 20) SEATAC commented that choke point distances are also difficult to argue as well.
- 21) SEA boundaries are being combined with wildlife corridor reports.
- 22) Different riparian habitats are being called out. SEATAC was unsure of the definition of “braided condition” under section (b) of Riparian Resources. SEATAC would like reword it to something like “to the extent of the braided channel area.”
- 23) SEATAC commented that in the vernal pools section (b) the term “watershed” should be added.

- 24) “Improved open space” is defined as dedicated open space (park), trails, and possibly manufactured slopes. SEATAC commented that the term “improved” open space be changed to something like “developed” open space, “parkland,” etc.
- 25) SEATAC commented that under landscaping, “native and locally indigenous” might not always be the most appropriate.
- 26) SEATAC commented that if a roadway crosses a wildlife corridor or linkage, a safe passage should be designed in the corridor.
- 27) Lighting height would be taken on a case by case basis – a 100 ft. limitation from structures should not be necessarily in place. The concern has more to do with the direction light is casted (should be directed downward, towards structures, or towards activity areas) and light intensity.
- 28) Vegetation clearance and agricultural cultivation over 2.5 acres are currently not addressed in the current SEA CUP.

OTHER MATTERS

6. **Public comment** pursuant to Section 54954.3 of the Government Code.
No public comments were made.